

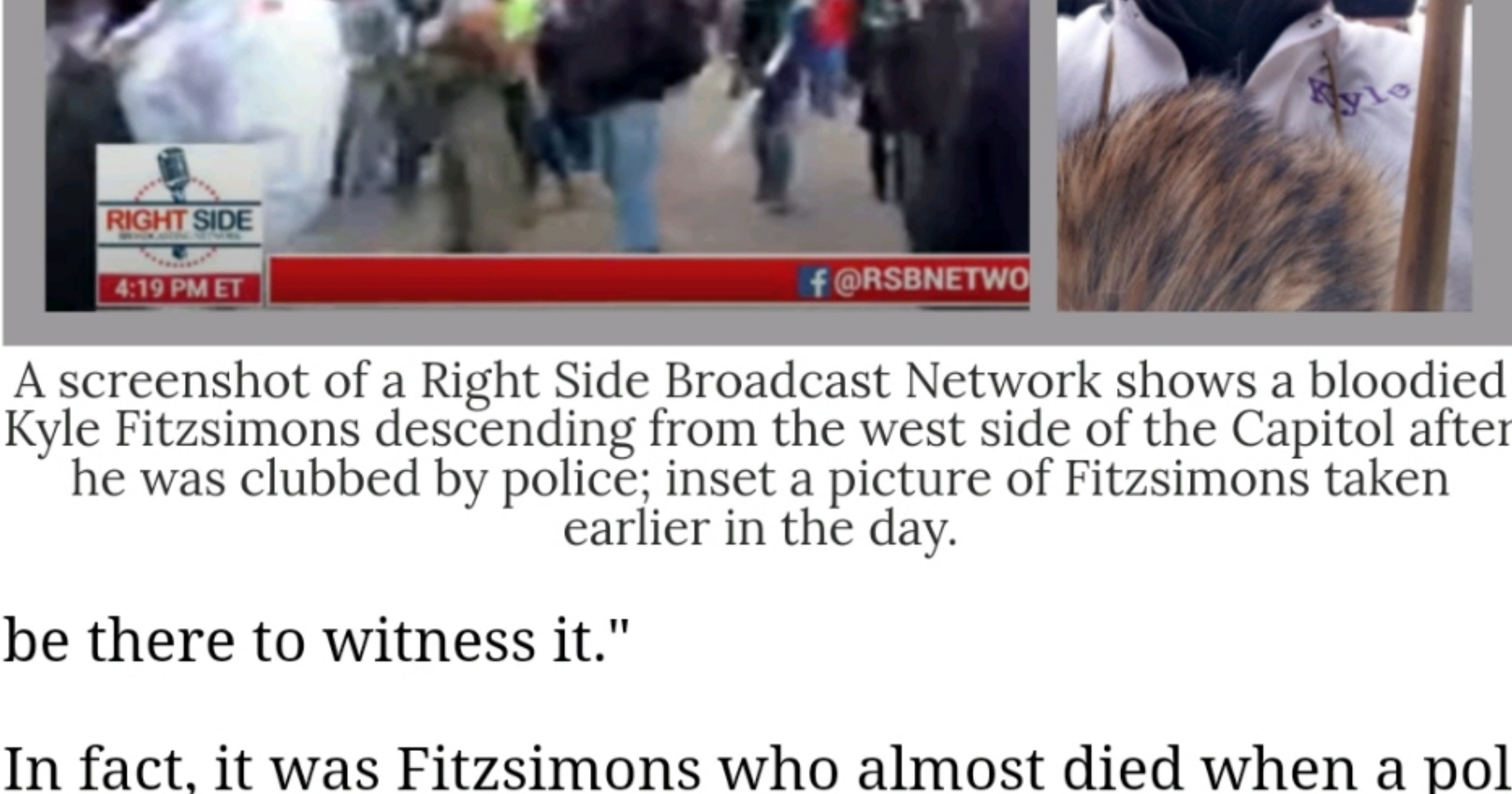
West Lebanon man recounts the hope, then terror he encountered on Jan. 6

Harrison Thorp 7:52 a.m.

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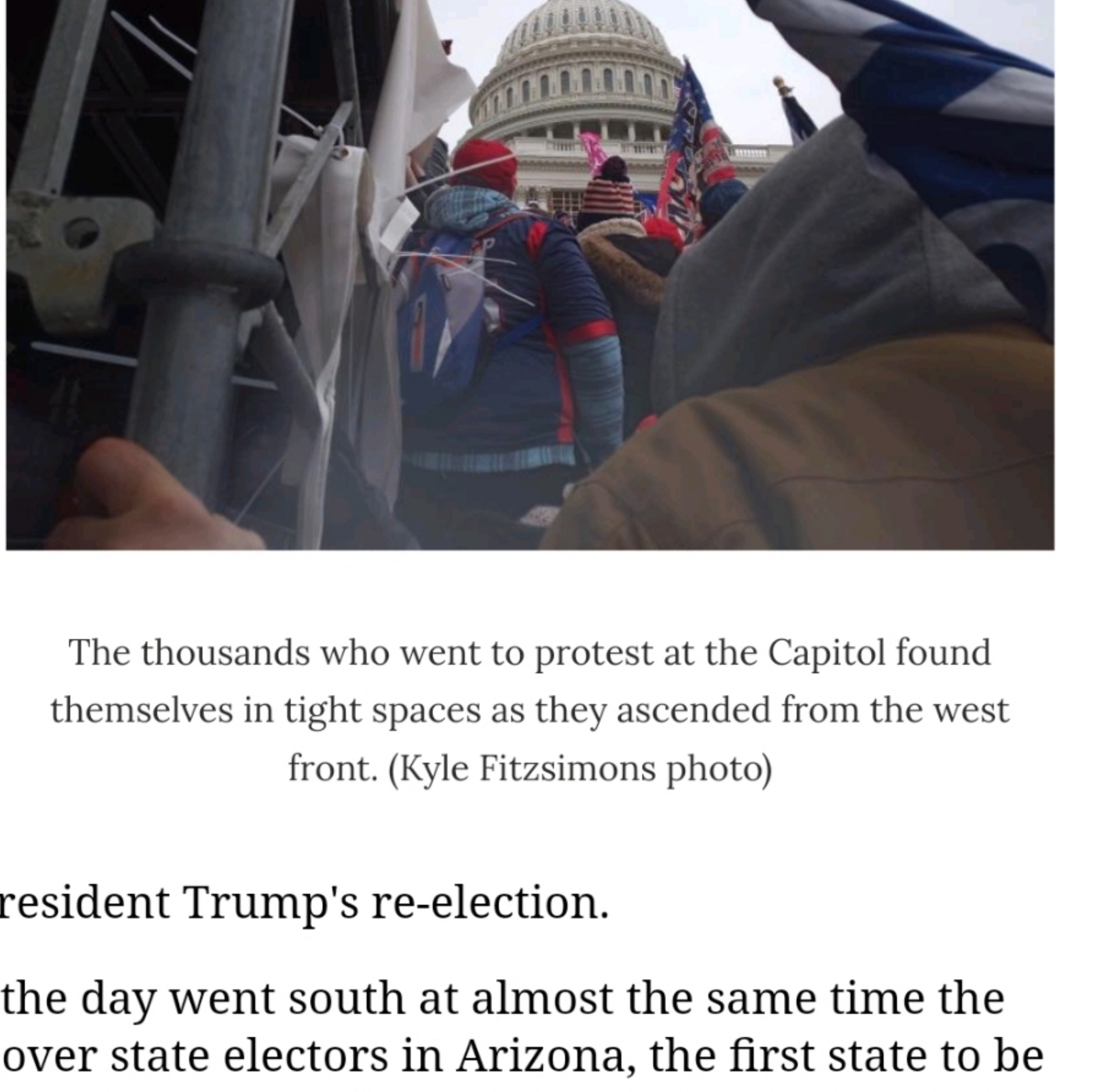
WEST LEBANON, Maine - Kyle Fitzsimons of West Lebanon said he traveled to the "Stop the Steal" protest in Washington on Wednesday, because if the Republic were going to die that day, "I wanted to

be there to witness it."

In fact, it was Fitzsimons who almost died when a police officer clubbed him over the head with a baton after a scrum of young men behind him pushed him unwillingly forward into a police line that had formed just outside the west front of the Capitol.

After he was struck and profusely bleeding from his head, he managed to edge toward the perimeter of what he called a "horde of humanity" where several Good Samaritans helped him down the Capitol steps to the street and an ambulance. He took six stitches at a local hospital to close a gash on the crown of his head, he told *The Rochester Voice* on Friday.

Fitzsimons, whose forbears were among those who attended the first Continental Congress of 1774, said he felt compelled to attend what was supposed to be a peaceful protest that would serve as a backdrop to a process in which it was hoped a Congressional initiative would decertify the Biden electors and replace them with those supportive of President Trump's re-election.



Interestingly, he said the day went south at almost the same time the objections were filed over state electors in Arizona, the first state to be contested on Wednesday. The proceedings were quickly dissolved after the news of the Capitol unrest.

But on this day that Fitzsimons ended up battered and bloodied on the Capitol steps, a morning series of speeches from President Trump and others touting a peaceful path to voiding what half the country saw as a corrupt election began peacefully and beautifully as well, he said.

A morning of hope and peace

Fitzsimons said he went to the rally where President Trump and others were to speak and was inspired by the diverse array of humanity before him.

"I saw people of every faith, color and creed," he said. "There were tons of people who spoke that were from Cuba, Vietnam and China that had fled communism. They were all begging attendees to wake up and understand how corrupt things had become here.

"The speeches from the morning were overtly preaching the election was not over, there was a path to victory through decertification, there was a plan to delay the certification by the House and Senate and then state legislatures would convene and (certify) the right result," Fitzsimons noted.

He said former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani broke down how Dominion voting machines software had stolen the election.

"All those who spoke were confident that good things were happening," Fitzsimons said. "We were reminded that the media was failing their duties, that a lot of stories of election fraud were untold and that this wasn't just about Trump but about taking away a man or women's vote.

They said, "If we let this happen, we will be ruled by technocrats," Fitzsimons recounted.

They (the speakers) also asserted the decertification of Biden electors could be done "legally and peacefully."

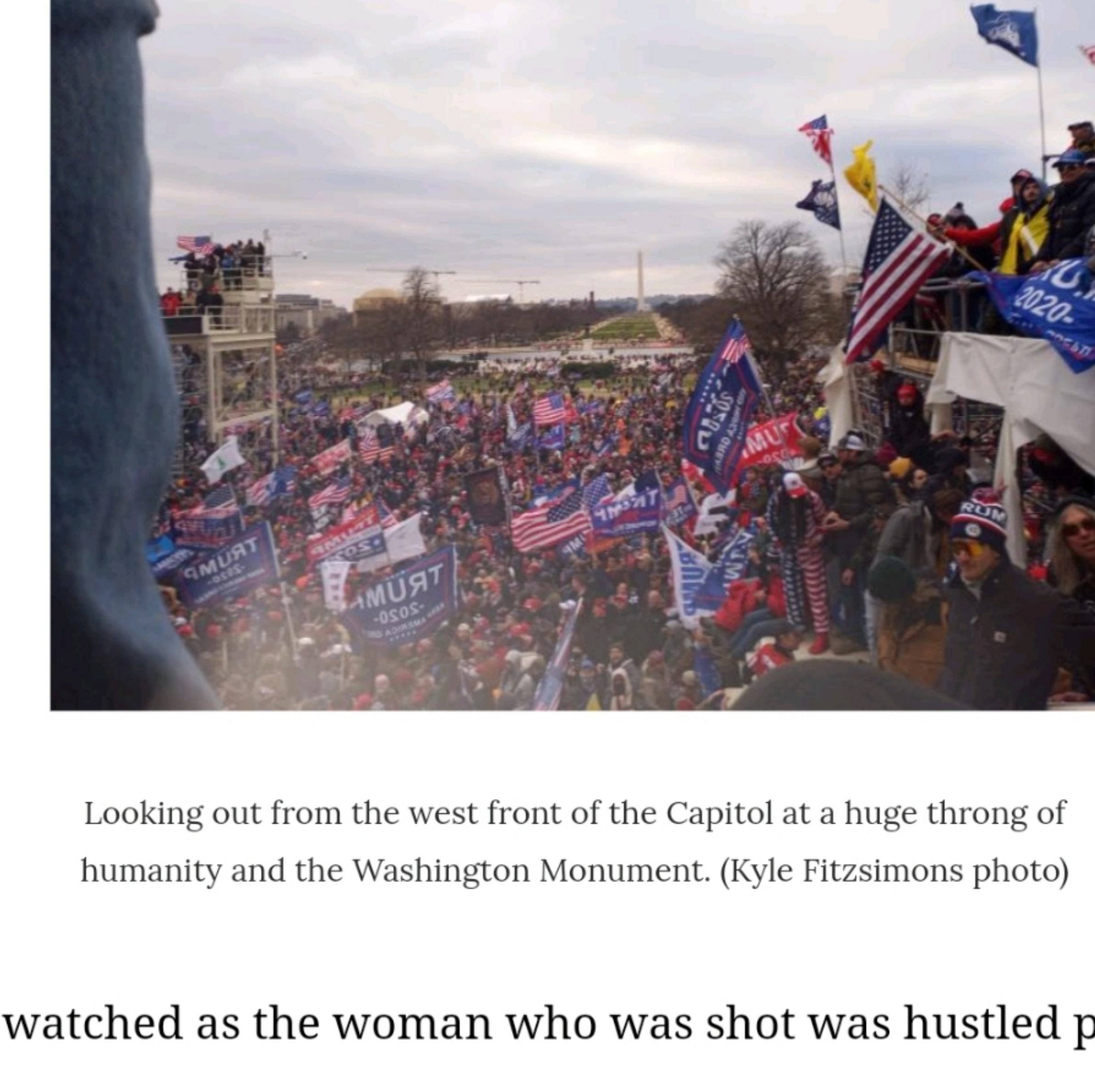
After a hopeful morning, a hellish afternoon

Fitzsimons said as the rally at the Ellipse ended they were asked by President Trump to walk to the Capitol, about 1.8 miles away, to "give our Republicans, the weak ones ... the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country."

Fitzsimons, who works as a butcher, said before heading to the Capitol he went to his car at a local parking garage and changed from regular clothes into his butcher whites. He said he carried an unstrung bow as a sign of his peaceful intent.

But as he walked up Pennsylvania Avenue toward the Capitol he noticed from a great distance something very bizarre: some people were already climbing on top of the building.

"I was thinking 'How'd they get there so quickly (from the rally) and get past security," he said. "I'd been outside the Capitol on Tuesday, and it was heavily guarded."



He said as the crowd reached the Capitol he heard people singing the national anthem, chanting "We the People," taking selfies and smoking marijuana.

"I made my way toward the front and heard someone say, 'Get outta the way someone's been shot.'"

He said he watched as the woman who was shot was hustled past him.

"Then the tear gas started, and it began getting hot, violent," he said.

He said it was around then that he began to notice "an enormous number of young men" surrounding him.

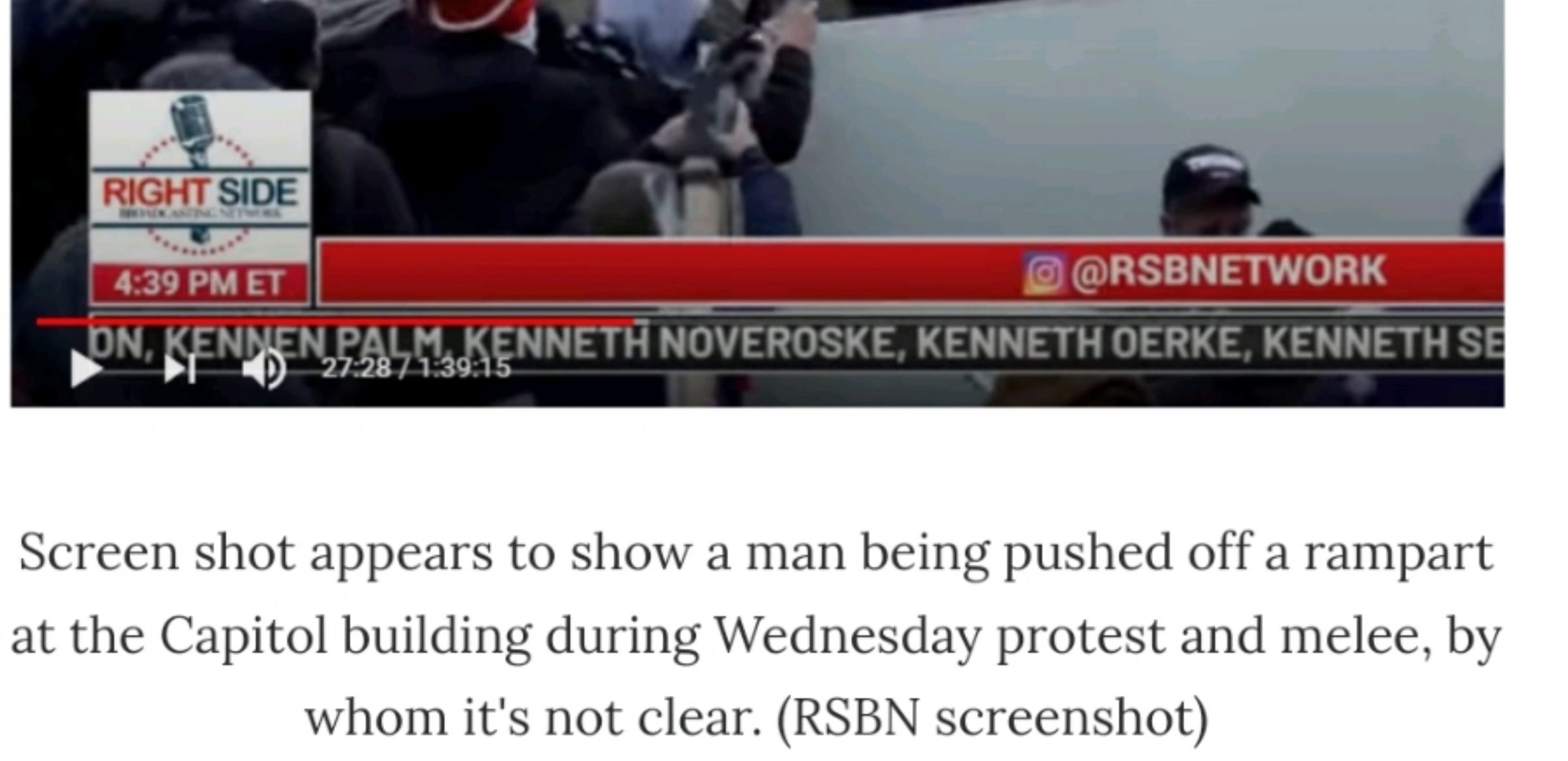
"I don't know if they were MAGA or Antifa," he said, "but it seemed there was a strong element that was specifically agitated."

He noticed one of the group had a sledgehammer, he said.

He attempted to stay on the ramparts, but was soon caught up in a "scrum" of men surging its way to the police line "that had an organizational level to it."

"The scrum was a barbarian horde, a crush, you couldn't breathe," he said. "It was such a push of men and women. If you had gone under foot, if you fought, you would have gone down and not come up.

"I was pressed into the front two times ... the only way out was to get hit by police or pepper sprayed. Police in riot gear clubbed me. Then I was pulled out by people on the side."



Fitzsimons, who also told his story to the Lebanon Board of Selectmen on Thursday, said the Good Samaritans were wonderful to him, helping him escape the violence and get to an ambulance out on the street.

He said he was taken to a DC hospital where he got six stitches on the crown of his head.

Looking back

Fitzsimons, who passionately loves his country, says he feels betrayed and used in a political struggle. He just doesn't know which side played him.

What was he hoping for?

Reflecting back he expresses an almost whimsical notion.

"I was thinking it could go down like we would link hands around the Capitol and it would be like Whoville," he said. "That was what I was hoping."

On the other hand he is angry that people were waltzing right into the Capitol.

"I had seen the Capitol defended a day earlier," he said. "Why were they so lax on Jan. 6?"

But he said mainstream media has it all wrong thinking they were there to wreak havoc on the Capitol.

"We are patriots, we are not gonna burn the house we own," he said. "This was not an insurrection; it (the violence) was an attempt to hijack a peaceful protest by agents provocateur.

"I understand that rebellion gets you nowhere and not what God wants, but I'm not the one who is rebelling, it's the leadership of this country. I was used. By whom? That's anyone's guess. In the end the American patriot was made the sucker."

To watch the Right Side Broadcast Network video of Jan. 6 Capitol protest click here.

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